

Appl. No. 10/688,492  
Amdt. dated 26<sup>th</sup> May 2006  
Amendment & Reply to Office action mailed 10<sup>th</sup> March 2006

**Listing of Claims.**

**1. (Currently amended)** A collapsible apparatus for supporting an article, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) a first, second, and third leg assembly;
- (b) an upper end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from an upper support member in a generally symmetrical fashion;
- (c) a lower end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from a lower collar support;
- (d) each said leg assembly comprising a hinge-fitting interconnecting a first and second elongated subassembly, said hinge-fitting adapted to permit at least a pivot range of 170-degrees of rotation and said hinge-fitting to comprise a locking mechanism for holding said hinge-fitting in a rotation-direction; and
- (e) said upper support member adapted to aid in the supporting of the article.

**2. (Previously presented)** The apparatus of claim 1 in use with the article and wherein:

- (a) the article is elongated in shape;
- (b) each said first elongated subassembly is variable in overall length and comprises a plurality of telescoping tubular sections adapted for interlock at a selected length;
- (c) said upper support member comprises an aperture for accepting the elongated article; and
- (d) said lower collar support is adapted for accepting a lower-end of the article for placement on a ground.

**3. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 2 further comprising an insert having an inner-aperture shaped to accept an outer perimeter of the article, said insert shaped to releasably fit within said aperture of said upper support member.

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**4. (Previously presented)** A collapsible apparatus for supporting an article, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) a first, second, and third leg assembly;
- (b) an upper end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from an upper support member in a generally symmetrical fashion;
- (c) a lower end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from a lower collar support;
- (d) each said leg assembly comprising a hinge-fitting interconnecting a first and second elongated subassembly, said hinge-fitting adapted to permit at least a pivot range of 90-degrees of rotation;
- (e) each said hinge-fitting comprises a first and second extension pivotally enjoined;
- (f) an insert having an inner-aperture shaped to accept an outer perimeter of said lower-end of the article, said insert shaped to releasably fit within an aperture in said lower collar support; and
- (g) an anchor comprising a looped-end adapted to accept a fastener therethrough, each of said first and second extensions of said hinge-fitting having an outwardly facing recess for accepting said fastener.

**5. (Currently amended)** The apparatus of claim 1 wherein:

[[~~(a)~~]] said locking mechanism is further adapted for holding said hinge-fitting in any one of a plurality of said rotation-directions within said pivot range.

**6. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 5 wherein:

- (a) each said hinge-fitting further comprises a first and second extension pivotally enjoined;
- (b) each said first and second extensions releasably interconnected with a respective one of said first and second elongated subassemblies; and
- (c) said locking mechanism comprises a through-hole and a detent pin.

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7. **(Original)** The apparatus of claim 5 wherein:

(a) each said hinge-fitting further comprises a first and second extension pivotally enjoined, said pivot range is further adapted to permit up to just less than 180-degrees of rotation, and said lower collar support is a vertical distance,  $d_L$ , from said upper support member; and

(b) with said pivot range at said just less than 180-degrees, said vertical distance,  $d_L$ , is greater than the sum of an overall length of said first elongated subassembly and an overall length of said second elongated subassembly.

8. **(Previously presented)** A collapsible apparatus for supporting an article, the apparatus comprising:

(a) a first, second, and third leg assembly;

(b) an upper end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from an upper support member in a generally symmetrical fashion;

(c) a lower end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from a lower collar support;

(d) each said leg assembly comprising a hinge-fitting interconnecting a first and second elongated subassembly, said hinge-fitting adapted to permit at least a pivot range of 90-degrees of rotation;

(e) each said hinge-fitting further comprises a first and second extension, said second extension having an outwardly facing recess for accepting a foothold adapted for stabilizing said hinge-fitting in connection with a ground;

(f) each said first elongated subassembly comprises a plurality of telescoping tubular sections adapted for interlock;

(g) each said second elongated subassembly comprises a plurality of telescoping tubular sections adapted for interlock; and

(h) said telescoping tubular sections of said first elongated subassembly are sized for interchangeability with said telescoping tubular sections of said second elongated subassembly.

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**9. (Previously presented)** A collapsible apparatus for supporting an article, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) a first, second, and third leg assembly;
- (b) an upper end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from an upper support member in a generally symmetrical fashion;
- (c) a lower end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from a lower collar support;
- (d) each said leg assembly comprising a hinge-fitting interconnecting a first and second elongated subassembly, said hinge-fitting adapted to permit at least a pivot range of 90-degrees of rotation;
- (e) each said hinge-fitting further comprises a locking mechanism for holding said hinge-fitting in any one of a plurality of directions within said pivot range;
- (f) each said hinge-fitting further comprises a first and second extension, said first extension having an outwardly facing recess for accepting a fastener for use in connection with an anchor adapted for stabilizing said hinge-fitting in connection with a ground; and
- (g) each of said first and second extensions has been securely inserted within a tubular end-section of a respective one of said first and second elongated subassemblies.

**10. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 1 wherein:

- (a) each said first elongated subassembly is variable in overall length;
- (b) said upper support member comprises a plurality of fork extensions to which said upper ends of said leg assemblies are pivotally secured; and
- (c) said lower collar support comprises a plurality of fork extensions to which said lower ends of said leg assemblies are pivotally secured.

**11. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 10 wherein:

- (a) a pin inserted through both a through-hole in each said fork extension of said upper support member and through a respective one of said upper ends provides said pivotal securing thereof; and
- (b) said lower collar support is adapted for accepting a lower-end of the article for placement on a ground.

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**12. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 1 wherein:

(a) said upper support member comprises a plurality of fork extensions to which said upper ends of said leg assemblies are pivotally secured;

(b) each said first elongated subassembly is variable in overall length and comprises a plurality of telescoping tubular sections adapted for interlock;

(c) each said second elongated subassembly is variable in overall length and comprises a plurality of telescoping tubular sections adapted for interlock; and

(d) said telescoping tubular sections of said first elongated subassembly are sized for interchangeability with said telescoping tubular sections of said second elongated subassembly.

**13. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 12 wherein:

(a) each said telescoping tubular section has been interlocked at a selected length; and

(b) each said hinge-fitting further comprises: a first and second extension pivotally enjoined, each of said first and second extensions having been securely inserted within a respective open end of an adjacent one of said telescoping tubular sections, and a foothold adapted for stabilizing said hinge-fitting in connection with a ground.

**14. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 13:

(a) wherein each said foothold comprises a mechanism selected from the group consisting of a stake, elastomeric foot, bolt, screw, pin, alloy footing, rolling caster with locking means, and caster mechanism;

(b) wherein each said telescoping tubular section is made of a lightweight material having sufficient strength for the supporting of the article, said material selected from the group consisting of an alloy, resin, rigid plastic, and metal; and

(c) further comprising a detent pin fastener for interlocking said telescoping tubular sections at said selected length.

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- 15. (Original)** A collapsible apparatus for supporting an article, the apparatus comprising:
- (a) a first, second, and third variable-length leg assembly;
  - (b) an upper end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from an upper support member in a generally symmetrical fashion;
  - (c) a lower end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from a lower support member;
  - (d) each said leg assembly comprising a hinge-fitting interconnecting a first and second elongated subassembly; and
  - (e) each said hinge-fitting comprising a first and second extension pivotally enjoined and adapted to permit a selected pivot range of rotation, each of said first and second extensions having been securely inserted within a tubular end-section of a respective one of said first and second elongated subassemblies.
- 16. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 15 wherein:
- (a) each said first elongated subassembly comprises a plurality of telescoping tubular sections adapted for interlock;
  - (b) each said second elongated subassembly comprises a plurality of telescoping tubular sections adapted for interlock; and
  - (c) said telescoping tubular sections of said first elongated subassembly are sized for interchangeability with said telescoping tubular sections of said second elongated subassembly.
- 17. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 16:
- (a) said upper support member comprises a plurality of fork extensions to which said upper ends of said leg assemblies are pivotally secured;
  - (b) said lower support member comprises a plurality of fork extensions to which said lower ends of said leg assemblies are pivotally secured;
  - (c) each said plurality of telescoping tubular sections have a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of a square, rectangle, triangle, circle, oblong, and an irregular polygonal shape; and
  - (d) each said hinge-fitting further comprises a foothold adapted for stabilizing said hinge-fitting in connection with a ground.

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**18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15:**

wherein (a) the article is elongated in shape, (b) said upper support member comprises an aperture for accepting the elongated article, and (c) said lower support member is adapted for accepting a lower-end of the article; and

further comprising an insert having an inner-aperture shaped to accept an outer perimeter of the article, said insert shaped to releasably fit within said aperture in said upper support member.

**19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15:**

(a) wherein said selected pivot range is up to 170-degrees of rotation and each said hinge-fitting comprises a locking mechanism for holding said hinge-fitting in any one of a plurality of directions within said pivot range; and

(b) further comprising an anchor comprising a looped-end adapted to accept a fastener therethrough, each of said first and second extensions of said hinge-fitting having an outwardly facing recess for accepting said fastener.

**20. (Previously presented) A collapsible apparatus for supporting an elongated article, the apparatus comprising:**

(a) a first, second, and third leg assembly;

(b) an upper end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from an upper support member in a generally symmetrical fashion;

(c) said upper support member comprises an aperture for accepting the elongated article;

(d) a lower end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from a lower collar support adapted for accepting a lower-end of the article;

(e) each said leg assembly comprising a hinge-fitting interconnecting a first and second elongated subassembly;

(f) each said hinge-fitting comprises a first and second extension pivotally enjoined and adapted to permit at least a pivot range of 90-degrees of rotation such that said lower collar support is adaptable for placement on a ground with a vertical distance,  $d_L$ , from said upper support member to said lower collar support being greater than a vertical height,  $h_{H-F}$ , measured between said upper support member and each said hinge-fitting; and

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(g) each of said first and second extensions is securely inserted within a tubular end-section of a respective one of said first and second elongated subassemblies.

21. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein:

each said first elongated subassembly comprises a plurality of telescoping tubular sections adapted for interlock.

22. (Previously presented) A collapsible apparatus for supporting an elongated article, the apparatus comprising:

(a) a first, second, and third leg assembly;

(b) an upper end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from an upper support member in a generally symmetrical fashion;

(c) said upper support member comprises an aperture for accepting the elongated article;

(d) a lower end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from a lower collar support adapted for accepting a lower-end of the article;

(e) each said leg assembly comprising a hinge-fitting interconnecting a first and second elongated subassembly;

(f) each said hinge-fitting comprises a first and second extension pivotally enjoined and adapted to permit a pivot range of up to just less than 180-degrees of rotation, and said lower collar support is a vertical distance,  $d_L$ , from said upper support member; and

(g) with said pivot range at said just less than 180-degrees, said vertical distance,  $d_L$ , is greater than the sum of an overall length of said first elongated subassembly and an overall length of said second elongated subassembly.



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**23. (Previously presented)** A collapsible apparatus for supporting an elongated article, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) a first, second, and third leg assembly;
- (b) an upper end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from an upper support member in a generally symmetrical fashion;
- (c) said upper support member comprises an aperture for accepting the elongated article;
- (d) a lower end of each said leg assembly pivotally secured to extend from a lower collar support adapted for accepting a lower-end of the article;
- (e) each said leg assembly comprising a hinge-fitting interconnecting a first and second elongated subassembly;
- (f) wherein each said second elongated subassembly comprises a plurality of telescoping tubular sections adapted for interlock;
- (g) wherein said telescoping tubular sections of said first elongated subassembly are sized for interchangeability with said telescoping tubular sections of said second elongated subassembly; and
- (h) further comprising an insert having an inner-aperture shaped to accept a perimeter of the article, said insert shaped to releasably fit within said aperture in said upper support member.

**24. (Original)** The apparatus of claim 23 wherein each said hinge-fitting comprises a first and second extension pivotally enjoined; and further comprising:

- (a) a second insert having an inner-aperture shaped to accept an outer perimeter of said lower-end of the article, said second insert shaped to releasably fit within an aperture in said lower collar support; and
- (b) an anchor comprising a looped-end adapted to accept a fastener therethrough, each of said first and second extensions of said hinge-fitting having an outwardly facing recess for accepting said fastener.